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INFO RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 9383  
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ OCT 8950  
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 5467  
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 6068  
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 4099  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 007224

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TAGS: [KJUS](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: SHOOTING VICTIMS REQUEST INVESTIGATION AND  
PROTECTION

REF: BOGOTA 6932

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer.  
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (C) On September 17, Miguel and Ualberto Hoyos, leaders of a resettlement effort for displaced persons near Curvarado and Belen de Bajira, Choco department, were shot outside their home by a man believed linked to new criminal groups and local ranchers. The Hoyos brothers believe they were targets for testifying in the trial of a murdered community leader and for trying to reclaim land seized by former paramilitaries. We visited them in the hospital in Apartado on September 20, and met them again on October 1 in Bogota to discuss their safety. We urged the GOC to provide appropriate protection for the Hoyos and to conduct a full investigation into the shootings. END SUMMARY.

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WITNESSES GUNNED DOWN  
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¶2. (C) Miguel Hoyos testified May 15-17, 2007 against paramilitaries in the murder trial of community leader Orlando Valencia. Miguel's brother, Ualberto, was set to testify at a later date in the ongoing investigation. On September 17, armed men shot the Hoyos brothers outside of Miguel's house. Both men, who are leaders of a resettlement effort for displaced persons near Curvarado, Jiguamiando, and Belen de Bajira on the border between Antioquia and Choco departments, survived the attack. Local police passed the house earlier, but Miguel said they did not respond to the shooting. The Hoyos Brothers drove themselves (by motorcycle) to the local hospital, where they were met by police and provided protection. The police later transported them to the hospital in Apartado and eventually to Bogota, where Ualberto is still recovering. We visited Miguel and Ualberto in Apartado hospital and spoke with Curvarado Police Captain Vega about security arrangements and the need for a full and transparent investigation.

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RESETTLEMENT EFFORTS PUT THEM AT RISK  
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¶3. (C) The Hoyos brothers were displaced from their homes in Mutata, near Belen de Bajira, by paramilitary violence and intimidation. They later returned with other displaced

members of the community to find wealthy businessmen using their land for ranches and prosperous haciendas. Ualberto said the ranchers employed new criminal groups to prevent them from returning and brought 180 campesino families from other areas to settle on the land that belonged to the displaced community. He said criminal groups exploit these new squatters to obtain benefits from GOC programs for displaced persons.

¶4. (C) The Hoyos told us displaced people who tried to return to their homes have encountered violence, adding that new criminal groups burned down several newly constructed homes and a chapel. During the Orlando Valencia murder trial, Miguel publicly denounced this activity. He also provided the Colombian National Police (CNP), the Prosecutor General's Office (Fiscalia), and the Colombian Army's 15th Brigade Commander, with the names of the armed men as well as the locations of ranches he said were being used by the criminal groups. After testifying, the Fiscalia provided him with a cell phone as a protection measure.

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VICTIMS REQUEST INVESTIGATION AND PROTECTION  
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¶5. (U) After their arrival in Bogota in late September, the Hoyos brothers asked Attorney General Mario Iguaran for witness protection measures including armored cars and bodyguards so they could return to their homes and continue their resettlement efforts. They also met with Mr. Luzano at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), representatives of Vice President Santos' office, Colonel Pinto of the 15th Brigade, and Colonel Aragon, Human Rights Director for the CNP. They urged these official to investigate the shooting,

protect displaced communities returning to their lands, and punish those responsible for acts of violence and intimidation.

¶6. (U) Miguel attended an Embassy reception in honor of the human rights community in Colombia, and briefly spoke with the Ambassador. We contacted the Fiscalia's Human Rights Unit to urge a complete investigation and to urge that protection measures be provided to the Hoyos brothers. We will also follow up with General Naranjo at the CNP, Vice President Santos' office, and the Ministry of Interior and Justice's (MIJ) protection program.

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